

## Purdue University Purdue e-Pubs

---

### Libraries Research Publications

---

1-1-2010

# Strategically Leveraging Learning Space to Create Partnership Opportunities

Tomalee Doan

*Purdue University*, [tdoan@purdue.edu](mailto:tdoan@purdue.edu)

Hal Kirkwood

*Purdue University*, [kirkwood@purdue.edu](mailto:kirkwood@purdue.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/lib\\_research](http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/lib_research)

---

Doan, Tomalee and Kirkwood, Hal, "Strategically Leveraging Learning Space to Create Partnership Opportunities" (2010). *Libraries Research Publications*. Paper 132.

[http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/lib\\_research/132](http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/lib_research/132)

This document has been made available through Purdue e-Pubs, a service of the Purdue University Libraries. Please contact [epubs@purdue.edu](mailto:epubs@purdue.edu) for additional information.

## Strategically Leveraging Learning Space to Create Partnership Opportunities

TOMALEE DOAN and HAL KIRKWOOD

*Purdue University Libraries, West Lafayette, Indiana, USA*

*The Management & Economics Library at Purdue University began a major physical and conceptual renovation four years ago. The conceptual renovation involves a rethinking of library faculty and staff roles and responsibilities based on the library's and university's strategic directives. The LearnLab space is being used as a springboard to create new partnerships, to implement our new roles, and to transform the perspective of an academic library's present capability. This article will highlight the variety of opportunities that have arisen by leveraging the LearnLab space.*

**KEYWORDS** *Campus partnerships, fundraising, information literacy, learning commons, learn lab, library development, student success*

### INTRODUCTION

EDUCAUSE identified advancing innovation in teaching and learning with technology in an era of budget cuts as one of today's top teaching and learning challenges (Educause 2009). Jason Bearce, associate commissioner for higher education in Indiana, states, "every conversation we have with institutions now revolves around productivity. It's not enough to find efficiencies in their operations; they must seek academic efficiencies as well, graduating more students more quickly with more demonstrable skills" (Bearce 2010). Students today come to campus with varying levels of competencies and learning styles. Research findings show that unless a learner is engaged in actively constructing knowledge, little will be learned or retained. As research on the physiological aspects of learning has revealed, "Active engagement

---

Received 16 November 2010; reviewed 28 January 2011; accepted 18 March 2011.

Address correspondence to Tomalee Doan, MLS, Head, HSSEB Division, Purdue University Libraries, 504 West State St., West Lafayette, IN 47907. E-mail: tdoan@purdue.edu

with the learning object—whether a lecture, laboratory process, text, or creative medium—increases the likelihood that the learner will both retain and be able to use information and skills later” (Lippincott 2009).

This case study will highlight the variety of opportunities that have arisen by leveraging the LearnLab space, a new instructional classroom space in the Management & Economics Library (MEL) at Purdue University. In the fall of 2009, the Management & Economics Library completed the first phase of a three-stage renovation. The first phase encompassed building a state of the art instructional LearnLab space and an adjacent quiet study room space. The funding for this project was provided through fundraising efforts and ultimately a donation from a Krannert School of Management alumnus together with a repair and rehabilitation grant (R&R program) awarded by the Provost office with the libraries matching the grant funds.

The R&R program was officially adopted by the Indiana State Legislature in 1981, and it employs a formula based on original cost of construction, building age, and the building’s useful life. The goal of the R&R program is not only to preserve those buildings that are essential to daily operations as well as significant to the university’s history, but also to enable Purdue to move forward, providing the best facilities and technology for our students and faculty. The award of a campus R&R grant for the phase one space sent an important campus message that the MEL renovation would allow Purdue to move forward with providing student learning spaces, leading to student success and allowing faculty to explore problem-based learning pedagogies in the LearnLab.

Until the completion of phase one, the vision for the library of the future had to be mostly articulated through architectural renderings and the actual sight of decreasing books and periodicals filling the collection-based space as they were relocated to a light archive browsable repository in the basement of the Krannert School of Management. MEL established a twice daily delivery service for patrons from the compact storage shelving space, while any item with circulation greater than twenty-two times remained in MEL. Removing low-use collections, retaining high-circulating items, and significantly reducing print reference materials whenever available electronically contributed to the move toward a total online desk top delivery environment. MEL encouraged students to use the library learning spaces by allowing food and drink into the library and brought in snack and drink vending machines through University Food Stores, a relationship useful for the phase three renovation, which includes a café. It is also important to keep in mind that building a state of the art learning lab facility won’t necessarily mean it will be used in the way it was intended. Utilizing the space as a showcase was a primary objective as the LearnLab progressed toward completion.

The outcome of these strategies proved effective. Because we were able to drastically change the look of the library and deliver information needs to students, faculty, and researchers through new service methods, MEL

began to gain significant understanding and support of the libraries' vision from the Krannert School of Management. The relationship between MEL and the Krannert School expanded in the areas of information technology, electronic resource collections, and information literacy instructional opportunities. It would be beneficial to describe the changed relationship. The school's advocacy for MEL and the value libraries can play in teaching and learning also increased. This initial interdepartmental relationship laid the foundation for all other campus success that has since occurred. The Krannert Dean asked the Library Head to speak to their Dean's Advisory Council during Alumni Weekend and provide a tour of the new LearnLab space. Every fall semester, Krannert has an executive lecture series with prominent business leaders speaking on hot topics in the field. As part of the speakers' visit, the school schedules a tour of the LearnLab space with the Associate Head of MEL promoting the instructional space as a key strategic initiative.

Phase one as a whole created an understanding of what a newly renovated library could accomplish in support of the school's and the university's strategic initiatives. Numerous faculty and administrators visited the LearnLab during construction. They perceived the space as innovative and became advocates for the libraries shifting paradigm. Some faculty members were early adopters and became instructors using the LearnLab for instruction after completion in the fall of 2009. In addition to the LearnLab's core purpose to promote engaging, technology-supported and interactive instruction, we are showcasing the space for fundraising within the libraries and within the School of Management by bringing in alumni and potential donors. As the faltering economy forces budget cuts, hiring freezes, and other cost saving measures, it is more critical than ever that professionals at all levels of the library organization contribute toward bringing in outside funding and developing strategic partnerships with campus units. This may not be in any past or current middle manager position descriptions, but it has become a necessity in today's economy.

## SHOWCASING THE LEARNLAB FOR INFORMATION LITERACY

The LearnLab, designed by Steelcase Inc., is a forty-seat instructional lab (see Figure 1). It contains workstations, three multiprojection smartboards, portable dry-erase boards, and a digital copy-camera to capture information from the dry-erase boards. The layout of the lab promotes collaboration and communication; students face each other across several rows or pods of workstations. The chairs swivel and roll creating a space that can easily transition from individual work to team-based interactions and back again. The room has no true "front," thereby allowing the instructor to roam about the room, present from any of the smartboards, communicate more closely



**FIGURE 1** Rendering for MEL LearnLab.

with the students, and connect the course content more effectively with the technology and the students.

The unique layout was attractive from the beginning, drawing in several School of Management MIS faculty interested in using it for their courses. This expression of interest, along with the HTM (Hospitality and Tourism Department) GS175 course, generated additional interest in the LearnLab from a variety of faculty. Activity in the lab has steadily increased and expanded over the course of the last year and one-half.

In 2009, at nearly the same time the LearnLab was completed, Purdue Libraries filled the newly created Wayne Booker Endowed Chair for Information Literacy. Information literacy is a key strategic effort for Purdue; filling this role brought campus-wide and international attention to the Purdue University Libraries information literacy initiative. The Purdue Libraries, in the years prior to the MEL phase one renovation, had begun to consolidate its campus spaces by eliminating and merging several libraries. A result of this consolidation was to bring the Hospitality and Tourism Department (HTM) into the purview of the Management & Economics Library. The norm had been one-shot library research sessions within selected courses in the HTM department; however, the department was revising its curriculum and saw a need for improved information research and literacy skills on the part of their students. The creation of the LearnLab and the hiring of a new librarian specifically to serve as liaison to the HTM department created a unique opportunity to meet the department's needs in information literacy. Librarians

from MEL worked with faculty from the HTM Department to create a one-credit eight-week information strategies course that would be required for all incoming HTM freshmen. The MEL librarians have so far taught six sections of GS175 Information Strategies for Hospitality and Tourism. The eight-week format provided an opportunity to experiment and innovate with problem-based information literacy learning within the context of the LearnLab layout.

Preliminary assessment of students who have taken classes in the LearnLab has been extremely positive. Surveying over seventy-five students produced the following reaction to the LearnLab space:

- 91 percent felt that it was different from any class they have been in.
- 80 percent considered it an exciting room to learn in.
- 79 percent believed the room allows for more collaboration
- 89 percent considered it an environment conducive to learning
- 95 percent would like other courses in the LearnLab.

A representative comment from a student stated, “The learn lab is great. The technology is top of the line and I always check there first if I want to go to a computer lab, but usually it’s full because everyone loves it. So maybe another one or two could be done?” We will assess the impact of the course over time as students move on through the HTM program to develop future strategies and information literacy initiatives. The creation of this course is opening the eyes of other departments and schools toward integrating information literacy and critical thinking instruction within their curricula. Increased interest is being generated from the School of Management, the Agricultural Economics Department, and the Consumer Sciences & Retailing Department to include an information literacy component within their programs. The MEL librarians are determining how best to scale our offerings to meet this demand.

The Management & Economics Library maintains control over the LearnLab scheduling; it is not part of the campus-wide classroom management handled by the registrar’s office. The rationale behind this is twofold: first, the libraries want to maintain the multifunctionality of the space by allowing it to serve as an open computer lab when no classes are scheduled; and second, we have identified an important aspect that any faculty bringing their courses into the LearnLab must be willing to change their curriculum to take advantage of the layout and technology. The expectation is that they will experiment and teach differently; MEL Librarians vet all requests through this expectation. The accounting professor, a self-described non-techie instructor, was so enamored of the LearnLab that he completely revised his syllabus one week prior to the beginning of class to create a more dynamic, interactive course for his senior-level accounting students. An Associate Dean within the School of Management commented

Instruction in business has long utilized teams and breakouts to compare perspectives, refine work product, better understand decision processes and hone consensus. Increasingly, this approach is not simply the dominion of management, but finds use in all the functional areas—economics, finance, accounting, operations, and marketing. A space like the LearnLab has given us a highly flexible but technologically structured overlay to conduct these class sessions. Through the computing technology, access to the information and computational power is ready and seamless; through the audio visual elements, brainstorming and work product can be shared with any granularity of the class. The physical layout allows easy instructor interaction with any team or team member, and rapid reconfiguring to groups as the learning goals warrant. Our faculty who teach in the LearnLab are invigorated by the capabilities and the students find the learning experience richer and more enjoyable.

The HTM professor was approved to bring in two of her classes, one sophomore-level and one senior-level course on business and e-commerce aspects related to the hospitality industry. A MEL librarian has been working closely with the professor to integrate information literacy throughout the course. They have conducted significant research on learning outcomes, and they will be presenting the results in a forthcoming article.

Interest in the LearnLab space was also high among other librarians within the Purdue Libraries. An information strategies course taught by a librarian from the Life Sciences Library focused on information literacy skills for Foods & Nutrition students. The course resulted from discussions with F&N faculty about how to better prepare students for the demands of upper-level courses. Most of the IL-related instruction occurred in the last two semesters of the curriculum but students needed it earlier and instructors wanted to have it emphasized and practiced throughout the curriculum. The course has been taught once thus far and is scheduled in the LearnLab for the spring semester 2011. Students in the first class found it to be a real asset, as did the faculty librarian. A geoinformatics course, EAS 591, has also been taught in the LearnLab. The instructor, Assistant Professor of Library Science Chris Miller, states,

Geoinformatics provides a fuller picture of how one finds and evaluates information, prepares and manipulates data, uses the tools of analysis and visualization (including GIS), and conducts their work so that data and information can be made reusable by the next scientist down the line. A holistic perspective is presented in a hands-on, project-driven course with opportunities to develop various specific skills that collectively serve to ensure data is reusable by the greater scientific community.

The LearnLab enhanced his instruction and content; he continues, “A lot of the course content is intricate and procedural—GIS workflows, web service

deconstruction, raw XML examination, etc.—and the ability to display and annotate this material in various ways was particularly helpful.”

The LearnLab is also attracting activity for a variety of unique single event sessions including library-developed programs, such as the Competitive Intelligence Workshop for MBA students to School of Management Programs, the Experiential Learning Initiative, and cross-university wide programs like the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans.

## EXPOSURE

The phased renovation was necessary due to funding issues. We anticipated using each phase to build interest and attention for the subsequent phases to garner additional support and funding. The quiet study space and LearnLab were highlighted by the MEL librarians to a variety of groups including a prominent mention in the Krannert School of Management’s Alumni Magazine in the fall of 2009 (<http://earchives.lib.purdue.edu/u/?kmag,3453>). The MEL Librarians gave demonstrations of the space to visiting librarians and administrators from Indiana University and the University of Notre Dame, the Libraries’ Deans Advisory Council, a group of visiting Science Journalism Laureates, a group of visiting ARL Diversity Librarians, and to the university president and provost. This last demonstration resulted in the MEL LearnLab’s being highlighted in the Purdue Alumni Magazine, *Collaborative Conversations* (<http://www.pursuantgroup.net/purdue/alumnus/0310/default.asp?tpgid=10159438&sn=1r>), and in the end of year message from the president as one of five key campus successes for the year 2009. This attention led to the university’s student television channel visiting the LearnLab and highlighting it in one of its BoilerBytes segments on happenings around campus (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3cb-fSbegQE>). The BoilerByte segment was shown across the BigTen Network. This exposure, in turn, attracted visitors during the United States Agricultural Information Network (USAIN) Conference held at Purdue University in May of 2010, as well as librarians visiting during the Project Information Literacy Symposium held in October 2010.

The exposure the LearnLab received, whether planned by the MEL Librarians or by outside interests in highlighting the space, greatly facilitated development and support of phases two and three. Phase two consists of an adjoining space designed for team collaboration with movable tables, small break-out rooms, several group-work tables with LED screens, and a conference room. In 2010, additional R&R funding was made available across campus. The provost provided \$250,000 for phase two, which was then matched by Libraries’ funding. The generous approval of this funding showed that the Management & Economics Library was on the right path in renovating and redesigning our space and services. Phase two



was completed and created an even clearer picture of the overall vision for creating student-centered spaces within the Libraries. Highlighting the two phases directly led to an opportunity with a donor to complete the renovation.

Fundraising efforts take careful planning, in-depth knowledge of the community, alumni, and university, as well as of library supporters who build and nurture long-term relationships with the library. It is most successful when everyone in the institution is supportive of these efforts and when joint efforts are made to cultivate potential donors. Creating a close relationship with the Development Officer within the libraries and also with the Krannert School of Management significantly increased the exposure of the LearnLab space and the opportunity to convey the libraries strategic vision to potential donors. Many tours, meetings, and instructional demonstrations were given by the head and associate head of MEL. One opportunity spurred a gift of two million dollars and a naming opportunity of a Krannert alumnus, Roland G. Parrish. A recent gift announcement for MEL stated that it would be renamed the Roland G. Parrish Library of Management and Economics, making it the first major Purdue facility to be named after an African American alumnus. The donor was passionate about the “experiences he remembered of the Library” during his college years that contributed to his successful business career. Library Dean James Mullins stated, “We are grateful for Roland’s appreciation of our reconceptualization of Libraries spaces—from the traditional book-centered facility he remembered so fondly into a collaborative student learning environment” (Purdue Libraries Newsletter 2010). This gift will complete the final phase of the MEL renovation, which will complete construction in January, 2012.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The LearnLab is now seen as a key learning environment that has received attention and praise by campus administrative leaders, including the president, provost, and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Student Success. This instructional classroom has been a catalyst for the academic community to gain a better understanding of the emerging role libraries contribute to learning and teaching. A few new campus initiatives are underway, including a task force to recommend a new model for university honors and student success programs, a task force to examine instructional equipment funds provided yearly to academic departments, and a course transformation initiative optimizing teaching for learning impacting up to thirty courses per semester over the next three years beginning in 2011. The Head Librarian of MEL has been asked to serve on these key initiatives representing the libraries’ perspective about how learning spaces contribute to student success and retention and advancing faculty experimentation in the classroom. Without

the demonstrated impact of the LearnLab, it is unlikely that the library would have been an invited player in these initiatives.

## REFERENCES

- Bearce, J. 2010. Putting a price on professors: A battle in Texas over whether academic value can be measured in dollars and cents. *Wall Street Journal*, October 23, C1.
- EDUCAUSE. 2009. The EDUCAUSE top teaching and learning challenges. <http://www.educause.edu/eli/Challenges>.
- Lippincott, J. K. 2009. Learning spaces: Involving faculty to improve pedagogy. *EDUCAUSE Review* 44, no. 2 (March/April): 16–25. <http://www.educause.edu/EDUCAUSE+Review/ERVolume442009/EDUCAUSEReviewMagazineVolume44/163794>.
- Purdue University Libraries Newsletter 2010. Roland Parrish's \$2 million gift puts Libraries on the fast track to the future. Fall, 1.

## SELECTED RESOURCES IN LEARNING SPACES

- Barton, E., and A. Weismantel. 2007. Creating collaborative technology rich workspaces in an academic library. *Reference Services Review* 35:395–404.
- Beagle, D., D. R. Bailey, and B. Tierney. 2006. *The information commons handbook*. New York: Neal-Schuman.
- Beard, J., and P. Dale. 2008. Redesigning services for the Net-Gen and beyond: A holistic review of pedagogy, resource, and learning space. *New Review of Academic Librarianship* 14:99–114.
- Coffield, F., D. Moseley, E. Hall, and K. Ecclestone. 2004. *Learning styles and pedagogy in post-16 learning: A systematic and critical review*. London: Learning and Skills Research Centre. <http://www.hull.ac.uk/php/edskas/learning%20styles.pdf>.
- Cook, D. 2000. Creating connections: A review of the literature. In *The collaborative imperative: Librarians and faculty working together in the information universe*, ed. R. Raspa and D. Ward, 19–38. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries.
- Dewey, B. I. 2008. Social, intellectual, and cultural spaces: Creating compelling library environments for the digital age. *Journal of Library Administration* 48:85–94.
- Doan, T., and M. L. Kennedy. 2009. Innovation, creativity, and meaning: Leading in the Information Age. *Journal of Business & Finance Librarianship* 14:348–58.
- Haggis, T. 2009. What have we been thinking of? A critical overview of 40 years of student learning research in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education* 34:377–90.
- Hunley, S., and M. Schaller. 2006. Assessing learning spaces. In *Learning Spaces*, ed. D. Oblinger. <http://www.educause.edu/learningspacesch13>.
- Klusek, L., and J. Bornstein. 2006. Information literacy skills for business careers: Matching skills to the workplace. *Journal of Business & Finance Librarianship* 11:3–21.

- Lippincott, J. K. 2006. Linking the information commons to learning. In *Learning spaces*, ed. D. G. Oblinger, 7.1–7.8. EDUCAUSE. <http://www.educause.edu/learningspaces>.
- New Media Consortium. 2009. 2010 Horizon report preview. <http://www.nmc.org/pdf/2010-Horizon-Report-Preview.pdf>.
- Oblinger, D. 2005. Leading the transition from classroom to learning spaces. *EDUCAUSE Quarterly* 28:14–18. <http://www.educause.edu/EDUCAUSE+Quarterly/EQVolume282005/EDUCAUSEQuarterlyMagazineVolum/157336>.
- Powell, D. 2008. Evaluation and the pedagogy-space-technology framework. In *Learning spaces in higher education: Positive outcomes by design: Proceedings of the Next Generation Learning Spaces 2008 Colloquium*, ed. D. Radcliffe, H. Wilson, D. Powell, and B. Tibbetts, 25–30. Brisbane: University of Queensland. <http://www.uq.edu.au/nextgenerationlearningspace/proceedings>.
- Radcliffe, D. 2008. A pedagogy-space-technology (PST) framework for designing and evaluating learning places. In *Learning spaces in higher education: Positive outcomes by design: Proceedings of the Next Generation Learning Spaces 2008 Colloquium*, ed. D. Radcliffe, H. Wilson, D. Powell, and B. Tibbetts, 9–16. Brisbane: University of Queensland. <http://www.uq.edu.au/nextgenerationlearningspace/proceedings>.
- Roberts, S., and M. Weaver. 2006. Spaces for learners and learning: Evaluating the impact of technology-rich learning spaces. *New Review of Academic Librarianship* 12:95–110.
- Savin-Badin, M. 2008. Learning spaces, agency and notions of improvement: What influences thinking and practices about teaching and learning in higher education? An interpretive meta-ethnography. *London Review of Education* 6:211–27.
- Silver, H. 2007. Use of collaborative spaces in an academic library. PhD diss., Simmons College. <http://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/38491>.
- Steelcase. n.d. LearnLab: A Steelcase research project. <http://www.steelcase.com/en/Resources/industries/education/Documents/LearnLab%20A%20Steelcase%20Research%20Project.pdf>.
- Stuart, C. 2009. Learning and research spaces in ARL libraries: Snapshots of installations and experiments. *Research Library Issues: A Bimonthly Report from ARL, CNI, and SPARC* 264:7–18. [http://vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com/hww/results/getResults.jhtml?\\_DARGS=/hww/results/results\\_common.jhtml.35](http://vnweb.hwwilsonweb.com/hww/results/getResults.jhtml?_DARGS=/hww/results/results_common.jhtml.35)
- Weiner, S. A. 2009. The contribution of the library to the reputation of a university. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 35:3–13.